

§ 269b.120 Answer to a charge.

The respondent shall file an answer to the charge with the Secretary of the panel within 15 days after service of the charge. Upon application and for good cause shown, the panel may extend the time within which the answer shall be filed. One copy of the answer shall be served on each party with proof of service furnished to the Secretary, and the original, which shall be signed, and four copies shall be filed with the Secretary.

§ 269b.121 Contents of answer.

The answer shall contain:

(a) A specific admission or denial, and where appropriate, explanation thereof; or if the respondent is without knowledge of the allegation, he shall so state and such statement shall operate as a denial. Admissions or denials may be to all or part of an allegation but shall be responsive to the substance of the allegation;

(b) A specified, detailed statement of any affirmative defense;

(c) A clear and concise statement of the facts and matters of law relied upon constituting the grounds of defense.

Any allegation of the charge not denied in the answer may be deemed admitted and may be so found by the panel.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

§ 269b.210 Referral to National Center for Dispute Settlement.

(a) Within 5 days after the answer to the charge has been or should have been filed, the panel may refer the matter, accompanied by a general or particularized request, to the National Center for Dispute Settlement of the American Arbitration Association (hereinafter referred to as the Center) to make an investigation and to determine whether the charging party has established a *prima facie* case.

(b) For the purposes of this part, a *prima facie* case means a case where allegations of an unfair labor practice that have been presented give reasonable cause to believe that such practice may have occurred, but where evidentiary proceedings are necessary for determination of whether the allegations are substantiated.

(c) The Center may use its own personnel or may hire individuals on a contract basis to conduct such investigations. The panel may consolidate or sever proceedings conducted pursuant to this part.

(d) Any party may request the Center or other appointing authority to withdraw appointment of the investigator within 3 days after designation on the basis of previously demonstrated personal bias, conflict of interest, or prejudice. Such a request shall set forth in detail the matter alleged to constitute grounds for disqualification. Denial of a request by the Center or other appointing authority shall be substantiated in writing and transmitted to the requesting party, and shall be submitted to the panel together with the complete report of the investigator required in § 269b.240(b).

§ 269b.220 Priority; acceleration of proceedings.

(a) A charge of "refusal to bargain" or a charge that, if sustained, would require the setting aside of an election or the conduct of a new election shall be given priority.

(b) The parties, individually or jointly, may petition the panel at any time to invoke immediately the formal hearing procedures set forth in § 269b.410. They may also petition the panel to entertain the matter itself without prior investigation and/or without the formal hearing procedure set forth in § 269b.410. The panel is empowered also on its own motion to so accelerate disposition of the case.

(c) Before accelerating a case the panel may utilize whatever proceedings it may deem appropriate and timely to allow parties in interest to comment on the proposed course of action.

§ 269b.230 Assessment of costs; posting of bond.

(a) The panel shall normally bear the costs of an investigation conducted pursuant to § 269b.210, but the panel may require that the charging party, the respondent, and/or other parties in interest or intervenors, or several of them, shall bear a portion or all of the costs therefor. With respect to each case where an investigation is directed by the panel, the charging party may,